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RE030605Z MAY 73 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9061 INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL AMCONSUL KARACHI AMCONSUL LAHORE AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

ISLAMABAD 3585

E.O. 116521 GDS: TAGS: PINT PK SUBUL PAKISTAN INTERNAL SITUATION: POSTMONSTITUTION ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY: DOMESTIC SCENE HAS GUIETED WITH PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION APRIL 10% RETROSPECTIVELY, BHUTTO HELD ALL CARDS SAVE ONE - BALUCHISTAN VOTES - IN YEAR - LONG BATTLE OVER CONSTITUTION UNITED OPPOSITION EVIDENTLY REMAINS INTACT, BUT WITHOUT A CAUSE EXCEPT FOR BHUTTO'S LEADERSHIP, PROBABLE BHUTTO WILL READILY WIN IN ELECTIONS IF HELD IN NEAR FUTURE, END SUMMARY

1. BHUTTO'S ACHIEVEMENT OF POLITICAL CONSENSUS IN EINAL VOTERON CONSTITUTION APRIL 10 WAS CULMINATION OF YEAR-LONG POLITICAL STRUGGLE. IT WAS UNEQUAL STRUGGLE PROM BEGINNING.

2. EVER SINCE HIS ASSUMPTION OF POWER IN DEC 1971, MOST PAKISTANIS -- INCLUDING MANY OF HIS OPPONENTS -- RECOGNIZED BHUTTO AS ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO RESUMPTION BY ARMY OF

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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. BHUTTO COMMANDED OVERWHELMING POSITION IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES OF TWO LARGEST PROVINCES IN COUNTRY AND ENJOYED GREAT PERSONAL POPULARITY IN BOTH REGIONS. HE CONTROLLED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITH ITS RESOURCES FOR REPRESSION AND REWARDS. HE REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED GREATER SKILL IN POLITICAL MANUPULATION OF MASSES AND INDIVIDUALS THAN HIS OPPONENTS. REPRESENTING GOVERNEMNT IN POWER, HE WAS ALSO FAVORED BY NATIONAL MOOD WHICH HAS INCREASINGLY REPLECTED DESIRE TO RETURN TO "NORMALCY".

AGAINST PERCEIVED THREAT FROM BHUTTO UNTIL FINAL ROUND, HELD OIFFERING OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES, AND WITH EXCEPTION OF BALUCH SARDARS, WALT KHAN AND ONE OR TWO OTHERS HAD LITTLE OR NO POPULAR FOLLOWING, ITS MAIN LIABILITY IN CONSTITUTIONAL BATTLE MAY HAVE BEEN ITS INABILITY ATTRACT ANY SUPPORT FROM MASSES IN ISSUE REMOTE FROM THEIR DAILY LIVES, EMBASSY AND CONSTITUENT POSTS BELIEVE THAT MANY AMONG EDUCATED CLASSES WHO WERE INTERESTED IN CONSTITUTION GENERALLY DISAPPROVED OF OPPOSITION TACTICS, ESPECIALLY OPPOSITION BOYCOTT OF ASSEMBLY. THEY APPARENTLY FELT THAT ANY REASONABLY DEMOCRATIC PERMANENT CONSTITUTION, NO CONSTITUTION OR CONTINUAL POLITICAL ARGUING.

4. NONETHELESS, OPPOSITION HELD ONE TRUMP CARD LOYALTY OF ALL FIVE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES FROM BAUUCHISTAN. PROSPECT OF CONSTITUTION REJECTED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES FROM ONE OF COUNTRY'S FOUR.
FEDERATING UNITS EVIDENTLY CAUSED BHUTTO MUCH VEXATION.
AND MAY HAVE PROMPTED GREATER CONCESSIONS BY GOVERNMENT THAN IT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE PREFERRED. IF BAUUCHISTAN WAS BHUTTO'S ACHILLES HEEL, VARIOUS BARGAINING POSITIONS TAKEN BY OPPOSITION PRIOR TO ITS ULTIMATE BOYCOTT OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY MAY HAVE ALSO INDUCED BHUTTO TO WEAKEN SOME OF CONSTITUTIONAL BOWERS ACCORDED EXECUTIVE IN HIS ORIGINAL DRAFT (PARTICULARLY IN THOSE CASES WHERE APPRECIABLE NUMBER OF PPP MEMBERS EVINCED SOME LATENT SYMPATHY FOR OPPOSITION STAND).



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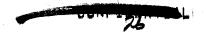
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5. OPPOSITION SHUNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF) HAS
EVIDENTLY SURVIVED CONSTITUTION SHASSAGE. IT HAS
HELD PUBLIC MEETINGS RECENTLY IN QUETTA AND PESHAWAR
WHERE UDF LEADERS ADVANCED SUCH DEMANDS AS LIFTING
OF EMERGENCY AND IMMEDIATE PROMULGATION OF CONSTITUTION.
WHILE UDF WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO ATTRACT SIZEABLE
CROWDS, WEBELIEVE WHAT LITTLE STEAM UDF WAS ABLE BUILD
UP OVER CONSTITUTION ISSUE HAS DISSIPATED. ONLY MAJOR
ISSUE REMAINING FOR UDF TO CHALLENGE GOVERMENT IS
BHUTTO SEEADERSHIP.

6. ALTHOUGH GOP: -- ASSUMING, AS MANY DO, THAT IT WILL'
CALLEELECTIONS THIS YEAR *** WILL PRESUMABLY REFRAINTFROM
ANNOUNCING THEMOUNTILE LAST MINUTE, ELECTIONS MAY BECOME!
NEXT MAJOR FOCUS OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE. REOPLES!
PARTY LIKELY TO ENTER ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN SPIRIT OF
OVERKILL WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED ITS POLITICAL ACTIONS
DURING PASTYEAR. EVEN THOUGH BHUTTO COULD REASONABLY
EXPECT TO EQUAL HIS 1970 ELECTION RESULTS WITHOUT RESORT
TO UNDUE PRESSURE AGAINST OPPOSITION. BEHAVIOR OF HIS
ADMINISTRATION SO FAR SUGGESTS ANY FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS ARE NOT
LIKELY TO PROVE AS FAIR AS THOSE CONDUCTED BY YAHYE IN
1970 (WHICH ADMITTEDLY WERE UNIQUE IN PAKISTANTS SHORT
HISTORY).

7. BHUTTO'S CURRENT POSITION IS ENVIABLE. HE BASKS IN POPULAR SATISFACTION OVER PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION. HE HAS PROTECTED HIS FLANKS BY CATERING TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON POLITICAL RIGHT, WHILE HIS TALK OF REVOLUTION AND FOREIGN POLICY GAMBITS (E.G. RECOGNITION NORTH VIETNAM AND NORTH KOREA) ASSUAGED LEFT, HE HAS DISPOSED OF NAP AS POTENTIAL NATIONAL RIVAL BY BRANDING ITS LEADERS SECESSIONIST. WITH GOVERNMENT APPARATUS BEHIND HIM AND HIS PERSONAL POPULARITY STILL STRONG, HE SHOULD GARNER SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY IN PUNJAB AND SIND IN ANY ELECTIONS HELD OVER NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. POSSIBLY MORE WORRISOME TO BHUTTO THAN OPPOSITION MAY BE CONFLICTS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY DURING ELECTION. PERSONALITIES SEEK TO ENHANCE THEIR POSITIONS.

SOBER



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